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Schools seek compliance with sex ed requirements

Topics include LGBTQ, consent, bullying and abuse prevention

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Some local school districts are still working to implement new statewide health education standards that were supposed to take effect last school year.

According to Sasha Grenier, a sexuality education and school health specialist with the Oregon Department of Education, the state in 2018 began requiring school districts to comply with specific parts of the 2016 health education standards, which



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Grant School District 3 board members discuss health education requirements at the Jan. 15 meeting.

include LGBTQ inclusivity, consent, bullying and abuse prevention.

Grenier said, each year, school districts statewide attest that they are meeting all academic standards the state requires.

For the 2018-2019 school year,

Grant County School District 3 reported it did not meet the state's human sexuality guidelines at the elementary school level.

Long Creek School District Superintendent Karl Coghill, who recently stepped into the position, said the dis-

trict is actively seeking curriculum that meets the required standards.

Dayville School District attested to the state that it is meeting the state's guidelines, while Monument and Prairie districts have not reported whether the districts are meeting the state guideline. The deadline to report is Feb. 1.

Meeting the new requirements has its challenges, however, because there isn't a single curriculum available that covers everything, Grenier said.

"Currently, there are no curricula available nationwide that meets all of Oregon's health and sexuality education standards," said Grenier.

Additionally, Grenier said, K-12 students are required to have four sessions of age-appropriate sex ed

topics every year.

"Many teachers need the training to have the skills and comfort level to teach topics that include child abuse prevention, healthy relationships, friendships, LGBTQ inclusion," she said.

Board members at the Grant School District meeting on Jan. 15 said teachers had expressed discomfort about teaching sex ed in the past.

A Humbolt teacher said, at most schools, there is a school nurse and a school counselor who are trained to teach the curriculum and answer difficult questions about sexuality, puberty and changing body parts. In a rural area like Grant County, where

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DIGGING HISTORY

Archaeologists studying Chinese mining sites in Grant County



Archaeologists excavate the hearth from a Chinese gold miner's cabin in the Malheur National Forest.

OPB/Erin Ross

By Erin Ross
Oregon Public Broadcasting

It was the kind of July day in Eastern Oregon when the dusty air waits for a spark to ignite a fire. In fact, two fires were already burning nearby.

Chelsea Rose, clad in black jeans, a black woven cowboy hat and black leather combat boots, was leading a team of U.S. Forest Service employees, archaeologists and volunteers through the backwoods. Two-way radios crackled with fire spotters' updates. Although the fires were still a distance away, another could have started at any minute. Everyone needed to be prepared to evacuate.

Rose stepped over felled logs and rutted ground. Piles from a forest thinning operation were scattered throughout the landscape. There was no trail, but Rose didn't need it — she spotted a small, unassuming depression in the ground.

"It's a mining ditch, an aqueduct," said

Rose, an archaeologist from Southern Oregon University. She turned to follow it after pointing out a large reservoir and a bump in the aqueduct that probably held a gate. Moving water, Rose said, was crucial for gold mining operations. Hand-built aqueducts like this one could stretch for miles, descending steadily across a mountainside.

The people who created them are almost certainly dead, but only recently. Many of their children are still alive.

Rose works on the Oregon Chinese Diaspora project. She studies the mass immigration of Chinese workers into Oregon, many of whom came as miners when Gold Fever hit Oregon in the mid-1800s. At one point, 40% of the residents of Grant County, where Rose is currently excavating, were Chinese.

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District developing plans to repair facilities

Study shows Grant School District repair needs at \$20 million

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant School District is developing a long-range plan to address millions of dollars of needed repairs.

On Jan. 22, the district received an estimate for the cost of major repairs at Humbolt Elementary, Grant Union Junior-Senior High School, Seneca Elementary and the District Office: \$21.2 million for repairs, while the price to build three new schools and a district office would be \$71.4 million.

According to Richard Higgins, an education architect with BLRB Architects, a firm certified by the Oregon



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Education architect Heidi Slaybaugh presents the assessment from the long-range facilities assessment Jan. 22 at Grant Union High School.

Department of Education to conduct the district's long-range assessment, the cost to repair Humbolt Elementary would be \$5.4 million compared to a replacement cost of \$20.7 million.

Seneca's repairs would cost about \$840,000 or about \$4.3 million repair. Grant Union High School's repairs would cost approximately \$14.1 million, and the cost to build a new school

would be roughly \$45.3 million.

Higgins based his findings on a facility assessment conducted on the four buildings through a \$20,000 long-range planning grant. ODE awarded the district the grant last year to assess the physical condition and determine the level of deficiencies and provide an estimate for repair or replacement costs of the district's schools and administrative office. The study found several critical problems that need to be addressed, Higgins said.

"There are minimal safety systems in place," he said.

According to Higgins, Humbolt, Grant Union and the district office do not have fire sprinklers. Seneca's sprinklers, located in the boiler room, are manually operated.

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